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Robert J. Crimmins
Executive Vice-President
Personal Insurance

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Dear Bob

I have tried to refrain from writing or bothering you unless I felt I had something really important to say because I know you are wrestling with far more important issues. But, in your recent conference call (*which was very well received*) you stated that more people needed to be able to reach you. In view of recent events, I thought it might be timely to give you a little reality check with the front lines to let you know how the situation looks from here. I will try and be as brief as possible but there is a lot of ground to cover.

I just learned that Vince was going to be leaving Customer Services to become your chief Planning Officer. On the one hand, that makes perfect sense. If there's anything you need, it is more people like Vince who hold the Company's interests first and then calls it as he sees it. Right or wrong, agree or disagree, you know he's not operating for some personal gain or based on some irrelevant personal agenda. I am sure he will be an extremely valuable asset to you in his new role.

At the same time, Customer Services and PI Administration is suffering a loss that may spell the difference between the success or failure of our customer service goals. And, because of everything that has, or is likely to transpire, these goals have become more important than at any time in my career with the Company. The media attention that was being focused on the Company is starting to shift to the industry as a whole. When that occurs, it may have an even greater impact (*and policyholder reaction*) on the Company than the specific MetLife publicity. But, it still brings with it a tremendous opportunity for the Company to strengthen its image by capitalizing on its customer service operations as well as its Field Force. Jim Valentino was just here and mentioned that one of the new Corporate strategies was to: *Build customer relationships based on; Service, Education and Trust.*

Sound familiar? It seems to me that you and I were discussing these potential benefits of Teleservicing back in 1982 after you first envisioned it! What an opportunity we have. For a long time I didn't think I would ever see the senior levels of management begin to be genuinely concerned with customer service, much less talk about it as a major strategy and priority. But, because of what's happened in the market place, it is recognized that it's become a necessity if we are to attract and retain business. And, the recent events give us an opportunity to make Teleservicing an even more valuable resource for Personal Insurance. But, the real question is: *Can PI actually begin to capture the full potential of this resource and its impact on the customer?*

I now have some grave doubts. If it's going to happen, from the customer's perspective it will have to happen at this level of the organization. All the discussion at the high levels of the Company will not change customer perception. **WE WILL!** While I think we're running 200 miles an hour trying to make this happen, much of the organization has become an anchor that is only dragging us down. From my own personal perspective, with Vince, *there was hope.* Without him, I'm inclined to say there's not much chance that we can really achieve these goals unless other significant changes are forthcoming.

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A couple of years ago, when Frank took over as the first senior officer actually responsible for Customer Service, I told you I was pleased with the decision. This finally positioned us (at least organizationally and on paper) to make some dramatic progress. The centralization of the administrative work to Warwick and Tulsa combined with Teleservicing created a powerful customer service operation. It also provided many new opportunities for change and progress with respect to our customers and the delivery of customer service. But, for the most part, the moment and opportunity was lost.

While there was some change, it was basically "business as usual" and everybody continued working on their own personal agendas and would not listen to this level of the organization. The incompetent leadership of this office only exacerbated that problem. Most of the change continued to be driven from the top down instead of from the bottom up. Major strategic change which was trying to come from the bottom up continued to run into brick walls or be ambushed along the way. Bear in mind that the two Customer Service Centers were now dealing with our entire customer base. Having that scope to our operations put us in touch with what was happening all over. It gave many issues a new level of magnitude and priority. We saw many things happening with our customer base.

In spite of this, great things have still been accomplished at the front line employee level. The employee growth of the two Customer Service Centers actually enabled us to change our "culture" with respect to the way we think about and deal with our customers. But the fact is, at the upper organization level few people really wanted to hear our ideas. They did not want to discuss the new opportunities and possibilities this organization change created. While there were valid distractions in our Corporate organization (i.e., Bridgewater move) that had some impact on the level of progress we could make, the organization was, and still is, primarily consumed with its own self-interests and personal agendas.

I spent years trying to get people to listen to the potential of proactively addressing the customer complaints that came through Teleservicing (including those from nurses). Some of these were truly frightening and deserved swift and decisive action. We long ago proposed a centralized Consumer Relations organization that would oversee the marketing complaints. It needed to have some real authority and be empowered to take corrective action with the Regions and/or Branches. The one and only attempt to address this was a valiant effort made by Vince during that brief period when he was responsible for Teleservicing before. But, the organization changed and it became apparent that this was an exercise in futility so for once in my life I actually gave up and dropped the issue. Based on complaints over the past three years, I tried to convince people we were (and are) sitting on a "time bomb" with the way "Accelerated Payment" was presented and sold to our customers. We are now moving, albeit very slowly, to address this issue, but again, nobody wanted to listen until it got really serious. I see this issue as being equally or perhaps even more dangerous than the Florida situation.

To effect change, our general modus operandi is to form "Task Forces" or "Natural Work Teams" to study the issues. In most cases, these are driven from the top down, controlled by personal agendas, and don't even involve the appropriate players. There almost seems to be an overt conspiracy against involving or even asking the opinions of the people who do the work or would have to live with the consequences.

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The current Teleservicing and Corporate 800 number Task Forces had no representation from Kathy or I until Vince stepped in and insisted upon it. We have jerked around and failed to take significant action with "address changes" since my days as manager of FES. Our current effort has gone on for over two years and we appear destined to develop a separate system that most of the users don't want, at least in the form it is taking. Again, we have a task force comprised primarily of "systems" people and a couple of token "users." Had people listened years ago, we wouldn't be considering this a major problem today.

Single Image is another example. This has been debated for on to three years now. Vince has had a dramatic impact on the progress of this project but we should be much further ahead than we are. The competition has leap frogged us on this. But, this was a "bottom up" project as opposed to a "top down" so getting the necessary support and action (prior to Vince) has been all but impossible. It still wasn't easy for Vince to get it off the dime and it is finally progressing, but at a pace that still puts full installation a couple of years away if not more. This, while we take 120 programmers off their projects to look for "expense savings." It almost borders on absurdity. Give the users the systems we want and need and we'll eventually get the savings, but not without the up front investment.

The Baldrige feedback was right on target with the statement that "Planning for operational improvement is not as rigorous as planning for cost reduction." We always go for the short term solutions. It's easier for people to cover their fannies by achieving the short term expense reductions than stretch for the long term savings by delivering the systems to meet the future needs. At the same time, we allow resources and money to be devoted to "pie in the sky" electronic projects coming from the top down that won't serve the users, aren't wanted, and we know won't work. (I can cite examples but won't waste the space.) *Single Image* is living testimony to our short sighted vision and the unwillingness of our people to take a risk. But, the Company has created the culture because this behavior continues to get recognized and rewarded.

With many of our change issues around the organization, we have a propensity to get everyone involved and let *everyone decide*. This is not effective participative management or a democracy. All it does is allow people to cover their fanny by having no individual to hold accountable or responsible. Every democracy needs a leader. All we should be guaranteed is that the affected parties to any change will be heard. Letting everyone *decide* only wastes time and impedes progress. After we have had our say, we need someone with a little vision, a little common sense, some savvy and the authority to make the decision and move forward. We try and get a consensus on too many things from the wrong people so we become impotent on the strategic issues that really matter. On the small decisions, we delegate everything upward because we don't hold people accountable. Consequently, we can't even get the small decisions made.

Kathy and I could probably help develop a *realistic and workable* strategy on the Corporate 800 number in a day. Instead, people have been involved that don't begin to understand the call center complexities. I have devoted hours upon hours trying to make people understand that the current direction would bring disaster, especially for the customers of *Personal Insurance*. But, again, nobody (other than Vince) wanted to listen to the facts and consider involving those who would be expected to make it work.

(Although Vince has been extremely supportive since he took over, are you aware that we have been *intentionally* returning a "busy" signal to thousands of policyholder calls because we have been in a battle to play "catch up" on the staffing from 1992?)

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While I guess Barbara is theoretically supposed make certain these issues are heard and understood, there isn't a chance. She isn't about to worry about the Company, the PI Customer or anyone else if it gets in the way of her own personal agenda or she can score more points by keeping her mouth shut and fully support Mr. Valentino's slightly flawed idea. But fortunately, I had a "one on one" with Jim Valentino and I think he finally began to understand the problems and issues at stake. But, someone still has to lead the charge if we are really going to make the changes required to meet the needs of the PI customer while implementing 800+MET-LIFE as the "Corporate" number.

Bob, there has been a revolution going on at this level of the organization. The size and scope of the two Customer Service Centers has dramatically changed the way every employee in this building looks at our customers. The revolution in the market place with respect to customer service is also very apparent to our employees. It is this level of the organization that should be driving change. This office represents about 42% of our customer base. If Barbara is to be the sole representative of that constituency within the organization, God help us, the customers and the Company. Her real impact and damage may not be visible for several years, but it will be there. I see no way our customers' interests will ever be adequately expressed and they will absolutely never come ahead of her own. We have changed so much at this level of the operation that most of those who have not been here in the midst of the battle cannot begin to comprehend what has taken place. She doesn't have a clue and most others are too busy to listen because of their own interests or agendas.

I've been knocking myself out trying to manage 200 people and tolerating all of Barbara's nonsense because, with Vince in place, there was hope. There was someone listening whose first concern was what was best for the Company. There was someone brave enough to be less worried about what was politically correct and who would stand up and be counted on the critical issues. And, it certainly didn't hurt that it was someone I considered a friend and who made it possible for me to tolerate this horrible environment.

Bob, now more than ever, we are confronted with opportunity. The opportunity exists to truly capitalize on everything that's happened. Between the establishment of a "Corporate" 800 Number and the further development of Teleservicing, we could use this resource to create a new image for the Company. In the process, we could:

- Build or substantially reinforce the relationships with our customers through easy access and a concerted effort to make certain they are educated
- Build or substantially reinforce the trust level of our customers
- Develop Sales Opportunities beyond anything currently imagined

Bob, I know you've heard all of this before, but what you're hearing me say now is that IT ISN'T going to happen unless some dramatic changes take place in the administrative organization. With Vince gone, you need somebody who will listen to the front lines. You need some (realistic) visionaries and some risk takers. But, most of all, you need someone who is capable of driving this change within the organization and can make it happen. And, that's where it all falls apart as I'm not sure that such a person exists. I thought if anybody could do it, Vince could. But, even then, I wasn't sure he would be able to get past all the organizational blockades and barriers.

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I recently told you that I thought you were the only person who could lead Personal Insurance out of this current situation. I meant that. You are the only one who can truly *inspire* the organization. But I was also operating on the assumption that Vince would continue to be there to challenge and shake-up the administrative organization. In fact, I really thought he would be the heir apparent to Frank, and would then be in a position where he could really make the needed changes. But, I have no doubts that he will have equal, or perhaps greater impact in his new role. But, the entire PI organization needs to be shaken up to meet the challenge and seize the opportunity that we face.

Bob, I hope this does not come across as just being my frustration or that I'm just griping and complaining. I am trying to convey my sense of loss with the repositioning of Vince and also give you a picture of the way it looks from here. I have long since accepted that I'm not going to change the Company. Vince did give me a glimmer of hope that it might really change but, at this point, my expectations are pretty low.

I also hope you realize that I am in no way trying to blame you for what I perceive to be the problems in Customer Services. You placed your faith and trust in people and as far as I'm concerned, it is they who let you down. You are at far too high a level to be able to know or control what's happening at this level of the organization. To a degree, we are today the product of a 125 years of a "Corporate culture" that is really hard to change, although some progress has definitely been made.

As I have told some people lately, I am glad that I am approaching the end of my career rather than the beginning. After everything that transpired a couple of years ago over my difficulties with Barbara, and Frank made it clear that I really had no choice but to leave or endure, I knew where I stood. I have no real expectation that things will change at this office so if I can last another three years and four months, I fully expect to be out of here. I won't take one more day of this environment than I have to. And, I certainly can't fight all the Corporate and customer issues on my own. I'll have to work when I leave, but I really think I can go sell telephone switches or find work in the call center/telephone field to supplement my retirement. But, I would really much rather be here if things were going to change and we were going to make a legitimate effort to become all we can be.

The fate of Personal Insurance will be determined by that time. MetLife will either be well on the road to being recognized as "The Company noted for the high ethics and integrity of its Field Force as well as its genuine caring and concern for its customers as demonstrated by its Customer Service operation" or it will probably continue to be just the "second largest life insurance company."

Even Jim Valentino acknowledged that PI is on the leading edge within the Company with respect to our Teleservicing and customer service. But, we should be on the leading edge within the entire industry. That's not going to happen unless there are some changes. We do have the opportunity in front of us, but I have serious doubts that enough of the organization is truly up to the challenge and commitment it will take to capitalize on the situation and go after the long term rewards and success that are possible.

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Bob, I have a feeling that Vince will be much happier in his new role and, in some ways, he's probably breathing a sigh of relief that he won't have to deal with the organization in the same way as he did in Customer Services. But, he will be sorely missed. I truly wish both of you all the best as you grapple with the overwhelming challenge that faces Personal Insurance. If it can be done, it is only you who can do it.

Please don't feel that I expect or want any personal response. All I want is to be heard, for whatever it's worth. But, do know that you, the Company and the customers have the loyalty, commitment and dedication of myself and my entire management team to do our very best to see that your visions are carried out, no matter what the obstacles. It is you who has inspired me and, in turn, enabled me to inspire them. If anything happens to that, it will be real hard to find a good reason to care anymore.

Warmest personal regards

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Director
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